

Vrabuddha Bharata

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BY THE WAY

IN course of a conversation an English friend remarked : "Is it not strange that the gentle and inoffensive Hindus should worship the terrible and martial Kali, as their God-less, while the blood-thirsty nations of Europe should profess the gentle Son of Man as their God?" There is greater food for reflexion in this good observation than is apparent.

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WE do not know about the truth of the saying "God made man after His own image" But we can vouch that man makes God after his. The whole of Western civilisation and Western culture is a protest against Christianity. The history of social and religious evolution in the East proved it long ago as it has now proved in the West that the destiny of man is too large and the forces that are leading him up to it too complex for any such thing as the meagre Christ ideal. We are not at all sure, therefore, that in the course of another century Christ will not be superseded by Kali in Europe. As to Christ in India, why, He has long been one of her gods—He being only a fraction of Buddha.

MR. Goldwin Smith closes the century for the *Contemporary* with essaying a bold task—nothing less than a general survey of the whole field of the science of religion, from its dim origins up to Christianity; and all, all pronounced untenable with perhaps a saving clause for the faith of Zoroaster. Rome in her latest dogmas has openly broken with reason. Criticism has destroyed the infallible book on which Protestantism was based. Even the evidence for theism is destroyed. "Science has substituted evolution for creation, and evolution of such a sort as seems to shake our belief in a creator and directing mind." Philosophy shows a first cause unthinkable. Scepticism is on the rise in all classes: atheism is making way among the quick-witted artisans in all countries. * * * The tendency of all thought is towards the belief in a universe without guidance or plan, the relation of man to which can never be known". He concludes by insisting that "our salvation lies in the single-minded pursuit of the truth. Man will not rest in blank agnosticism: he is irresistibly impelled to inquiry into his origin and destiny."—*Review of Reviews*.

WHATEVER the field of his action the business instinct of the Saheb always stands him in good stead. Proselytisation among the higher classes in India has been a losing game. So the Saheb missionary hit upon a new plan. He started boarding houses for young Indian students. The schools and colleges that he established had been failures so far as the purpose next to his heart was concerned. In a boarding house superintended by himself and in close familiar contact with highly impressionable young men, outside the formal school or college hours, he could get a better chance of doing his work: the obligation would be more direct and palpable, the personal influence more irresistible and opportunities more plentiful. And his new hit has brought him a measure of success.

WE gather from a Calcutta contemporary that though the Oxford Mission in Calcutta has no college of its own, it has started a boarding house for Hindu students. The fee is Rs. 12 a month per head, but the Mission lays a further claim of gratitude on the hearts of its boarders by spending about Rs. 200 every month from its own pocket in addition to the fees it realises. Whatever his faults and he has many, you can make the Hindu do almost anything if you can work upon his gratitude. So this is quite the right move. Two Sahebs of the Mission live in the boarding house with the boys as their Superintendents and naturally "attack many points of Hindu religion, and caricature the gods and goddesses of the Hindus—the students remain dumb and mute being

utterly incapable to explain these things either to the Sahebs or to themselves." No conditions of successful attack and victory could be more favourable. Boys who are already under many obligations and ignorant of the peerless religion and philosophy of their forefathers, are of course no match to the superior personality and trained intellect of their assailants. It is no wonder therefore, that some of them have been perverted from Hinduism.

WE cannot blame the boys for walking into this new missionary snare and "selling their conscience" "for mere cheap accommodation." Nor can we find fault with their parents or guardians for neglect of duty. Because neither of the parties can help themselves, because neither are well equipped to carry on a struggle successfully, which, whether they will or not, is beyond their power to avoid. Like their sons and wards, parents and guardians are ignorant of and indifferent to their *Sanatan Dharma*. And if they are poor, what reason on earth can make them decide against a "cheap accommodation?"

TO our mind, the fault lies with the leaders of Hindu society : with those, in the first place, who are wealthy and know the value of their religion; secondly, with those, who combine such knowledge with influence and power in society, if not wealth; and lastly, with those intelligent, and in their own way, patriotic and unselfish men, well acquainted with the beauty of their religion and philosophy—of whom young Bengal possesses not a few—for neglecting the welfare of

the "thousands of the most intellectual part of the rising generation", on the principle, "To whom much has been given, of him much shall be required."

IT may be said, that geniuses are born, not made. But there is one thing at least which we can do. We can multiply ten-fold the number of those who are qualified to be the assistants and interpreters of these men, who can take their ideas and carry them into operation in the different walks in life to which they can devote themselves.

Joseph Chamberlain.

If to bring peace into the world is the sum and substance of Buddha's religion, we are afraid, Mr. Dharmapala has been drifting away from it. From a copy of a memorial submitted to the Bengal Government by the Mahanta of Bodh Gaya we find that he has been trying in the name of the Buddhists and their interests, without legal right, to encroach on Hindu religious rights in the town of Bodh Gaya. According to the memorial he has succeeded in inducing the local District Board to accept his offer of Rs. 13,000 for constructing a Dhamasala for the residence of Buddhist priests and pilgrims. This is naturally regarded with grave apprehension by the Mahanta, as a fertile source of constant disturbance and quarrel and a covert attempt to bring the Mahabodhi Temple under the control of his society—an attempt which he has been at for the last seven or eight years, in spite of failure and defeat at the tribunals of justice of the land.

Buddhism like all the other religious denominations having their birth on the

Indian soil, sprang from the *Sanatan Dharma* and was finally absorbed into it by the inevitable Laws of Being when ceasing to merit a separate existence. No student of history can afford to ignore this fact. Mr. Dharmapala has set his heart to achieve the unnatural,—to revive Buddhism in India—to keep a hand alive after severing it from the trunk. What else, but failure, disturbance and quarrel could be the result?

Ours are ever the most willing hearts to see people helped on to realise and act up to the spirit of Lord Buddha's teachings. The success of a body of teachings is not to be measured by the number of its adherents, temples or monasteries. The depth and intensity of spirituality of its followers is the sure index of its potency. Mr. Dharmapala would be spending his energy to much better purpose and serving his Master more faithfully if he restricted his attention to the Buddhists. We shall be glad to see Mr. Dharmapala doing good work, which we are sure he can, if he gives up his childish notions about propagating Buddhism in India.

We find it necessary to state that the interesting story, "A Chapter of Social Reform" concluded in our last, and other papers which have appeared from time to time in these pages over the *non-deplume* "Twentieth Century", are all of them *original* contributions, not reprints, as some of our readers seem to have imagined.

MAKE your best thoughts in action.
BE athat thou prayest to be made

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

KAMINI KANCHANA : THEIR CONQUEST—I

TRY to have absolute mastery over thy sexual instinct. If one succeeds in it, a physiological change is produced in the body by the development of a nerve known by the name of *Medha* (whose function it is to transmute the lower energies into spiritual). The knowledge of the higher self is gained after the formation of this *Medha* nerve.

THE snakes are venomous reptiles. If you go to catch them you are sure to be bitten. But the man who has learnt the art of charming them by magnetised dust, why, what is it for him to catch them? He can play with seven of them twisted round his neck.

WATER flows under a bridge but never stagnates; so money passes through the hands of the free but it is never hoarded by them.

HE is the true man whose servant is money. Those who do not know how to use money do not deserve to be called men.

There are some who boast of their wealth and power, of their name and fame and high status in society. But all these are for a few days only. None of these will follow them after death.

THERE is nothing to be proud of in money. If you say, you are rich, there are richer and richer men than you, in

comparison with whom you are a mere beggar. After dusk when the glow-worms make their appearance, they think, "We are giving light to the world." But when the stars rise their pride is gone. Then the stars begin to think, "We are shedding light on the universe. After sometime, the moon ascends the sky, and the stars are humiliated and look melancholy. So again the moon begins to be proud and think that by her light the world is lighted and smiles and bathes in beauty and cheerfulness. But, lo! the dawn proclaims the advent of the rising sun on the eastern horizon. Where is the moon now?

If they who think themselves rich ponder over these natural facts they would never, never boast of their riches and power.

If you smear the palms of your hands with oil and then break open a jack-fruit, the milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to your hands and trouble you. So if you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the Universal Self, and then live in the midst of woman and wealth, they will affect you in no way.

How does the attraction of sensual and worldly pleasures die away?

In God, who is the embodiment of all happiness and all pleasure condensed. They who realize Him can find no attraction in the cheap and worthless pleasures of the world.

A NEED OF HINDUISM :

THE READMISSION OF PERVERTS.

I beg to draw the attention of your readers to the continual weakening of the Hindu society by the conversion of its members into strange faiths and ask if it is not yet time to take some steps to receive those back who have been perverted from it. The suicidal superstition of outcasting men who have crossed the *Kalapani* has been nearly put down in all the progressive communities. It is high time that a gate were also opened for the return of her estranged children to the Mother Faith.

Very few leave Hinduism for their religious convictions. The majority embrace the golden calf of churchianity to keep the wolf from their door : others succumb to the temptations of the flesh. These are wellknown facts and need no verification. That these unhappy folk, after the passing away of the first heat and glitter, should have cause to repent bitterly their folly and pine for their home and friends is quite natural ; and it could never be human and just, nor profitable, to forever refuse them entrance into the faith of their fathers, the all-tolerant and all-embracing eternal religion. The Lord says in the Gita that the sinful and the weak when purified by the fire of knowledge attain His state. Aye, even such a creature as man when properly purified may go up to the Lord—not only go up to, but become one with Him. What, could he ever be so fallen as not to be deserving of gaining ingress into the Hindu society after proper purification ? Is the Hindu society superior in purity to the Lord Himself ? We must give up this madness, this blind, dark, ultra-timasic stupidity

if we want to run the race of life as a nation much longer.

Let us look at the matter from the common-sense view-point. Unorthodox food, association and conduct have a deteriorating effect upon men. Those who walk out of the pale of Hinduism, deteriorate themselves by these. Hence they are unworthy of the Hindu society. This is the long and short of the philosophy of outcasting. Let us honestly tell ourselves if in the present Hindu society these misdeeds are visited with any punishments. No. Absolutely none. A man may pass as a Hindu or Hindus and yet do all these and more. Only let him not identify himself with another faith. So long as he does not do this, nothing can de-Hinduise him.

Like an individual, a society too, succumbs to the deadly poison of insincerity and hypocrisy. Let us bear this in mind. We all know there is no difference between perverts from Hinduism, foreign-travelled Hindus and hundreds of men passing for orthodox and unimpeachable Hindus, in the matter of food, association and conduct. What reason then could there be against admitting the alienated children of Hindus into their mother-fold after due purificatory expiation?

Nor is such admission altogether without precedent in the past. It is true nothing like this was ever done by the suffrage of the whole Hindu nation, for the sufficient reason that there never arose any occasion for so doing. But as a matter of fact—whole communities of Hindus converted into

Mahomedanism during the Moslem rule were reconverted into Hinduism during the great Vaishnava movement of Sri Chaitanya and after. The present writer recollects an instance of this told him by the late revered Bijoy Krishna Goswami. Goswamiji, then a Brahmo preacher, happened to pass a few days in a part of Bengal—the name of which escapes our memory—where he found a section of the villagers, who, though Hindus to all intents and purposes, unconsciously practised certain Mahomedan rites. These had evidently been undergoing slow reconversion from Mahomedanism to Hinduism.

According to competent authorities born aliens have been Hinduised in the past by crowds and the process is still going on. This statement, according to them, not only applies to aboriginal tribes, outlying nations and almost all our conquerors before the Mahomedan conquest, but also to all those castes who find a special origin in the Puranas.

If we calmly consider the above facts and specially the fact of the process of devitalisation of Hindu society that has been steadily going on in the absorption of its members by other faiths, the urgency of inaugurating a movement which will bring these lost children back home will be realised*. Possibly it is impossible at once to restore the perverted ones their old place in Hindu society. They will have to make a community of their own for the present, each observing its own *āchārā*, as in the main body. The complete incorporation will probably be a question of years.

To form a nucleus of the movement a

It is also worth considering what a salutary effect this movement will have upon the existing zeal of our missionary friends—a zeal that is certainly worthy of a better cause.

fund is necessary, for it is vital for success that the colony which will be thus formed in a few years may not lack material prosperity. Many will have to give up their positions and incomes to return to the mother-fold. Farms, workshops, an educational and industrial institute, are some of the immediate necessities which will have to be provided.

Would not our leading organs of public opinion take up this subject and by comment, discussion and awakening of public interest help in carrying out the project into practice?

A SANNYASI
FOLLOWER OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Faith must render an account of herself to reason. Mysteries must give place to facts. Religion must relinquish that imperious, that domineering position which she has so long maintained against science. There must be absolute freedom of thought. The ecclesiastic must learn to keep himself within the domain he has chosen and cease to tyrannize over the philosopher, who, conscious of his strength and the purity of his motives, will bear such interference no longer.—*Draper.*

We know nothing indicative of any relation between morality and the inscrutable source of all things. Whether wickedness can in any way affect the higher power, or whether we are punished after death for sins committed in this life are questions about which we are superlatively ignorant; but we are absolutely sure that wrong doing causes sorrow and pain in this world and that the wrong doer himself often suffers untold pangs on account of his transgressions.—*Herbert Spencer.*

My experience of life makes me sure of one thing, which I do not try to explain—that the sweetest happiness we ever know comes not from love, but from sacrifice, from the effort to make others happy.—*O'Reilly.*

SAT-SANGA

IT is difficult to overestimate the good accruing from association with the spiritual. While each and every man cannot reap the benefit of *Sadhu-sanga* in full, it is proven that its uplifting influence never goes in vain. Its action is like fire upon wood. The dry fuel - the sincere and self-controlled *Mumukshu*, ignites and blazes up at the first contact. Those who are wet with the water of desire take time, smoke, smoulder, according to their internal dampness, but if the contact remains unbroken the final transformation into fire is certain in all cases.

Four porters keep the door of *Moksha*, says the *Yoga-Vasistha*: They are *Shanti* (peace), *Santosh* (contentment), *Sat-vichar* (discrimination between the True and the False), and *Sadhu-sanga*. If one is unable to gain the friendship of all four at once, the close friendship of one of them at least should be cultivated, as that will in time gain for one the goodwill of the others. If one does not succeed with the other porters, let one try *Sadhu-sanga*. His friendship is most easily gained and lasts the longest as it is the surest to produce the wished-for result.

Various ways have been taught by sages to gain the benefit of *Sat-sanga* in its entirety. The following may be given as the essential points. Never visit a *Sadhu* empty handed. Take at least a flower or a leaf to lay before him. Do not meet him without salutation. Seize the opportunity of asking him at least one question nearest to your heart, even if you think that you know everything.

The reason why all cannot reap the full benefit of *Sat-sanga* is very simple. Because when they go to a *Sadhu*, they do not leave their thought-pouches behind them. Can you

do justice to the good things served you in a sumptuous dinner if you attend it with a full stomach? People as a rule chew the cud of their usual sweet and bitter thoughts in their minds while in the company of a *Sadhu*. How could the purity of the *Sadhu's* mind produce its full effect upon theirs under this condition? Shut your mind, while with the *Sadhu*, to your usual thoughts, your every day cares, hopes and fears. Try to give your whole mind to him, make it one-pointed towards him. If you cannot do it, gaze steadfastly on him, or concentrate your hearing on his voice. And you will soon see the result.

In the fifth and sixth chapters of the first *Skandha* of *Srimadbhagavata*, Narada tells the story of his previous incarnation as follows. "I was the son of a *Sudra* woman who was a servant of some *Rishis*. When during the four months of rain the *Rishi's* were all living together, my mother commissioned me to wait upon them. I used to attend on them and carry out their orders most faithfully setting aside all boyish restlessness, play and greed. I did not talk much. Though the *Rishi's* were impartial to all, they became very fond of me and did me many a special kindness. One day by their command I partook of the remnants of their food which were left in their begging bowls. From that hour a new life dawned upon me. The dark cloud of sin began to lift from my mind and the light of spirituality made its presence felt. I began to advance steadily on helped and strengthened unconsciously by their sanctifying company; and listening to the hymns and prayers which they sang three times in the day, I soon came to understand that I was not the body, it was only to *Atman* that the

identification of self and body was due. I was really the Absolute Brahman beyond all phenomena. Thus I lived with them and served them those four months, getting rid of my *Tamas* and *Rajogunas* every moment and finding myself at the end of each day more and more sinless, devoted to the Lord, humble and appreciative.

When leaving that place at the end of the rains, the *Rishis* moved by my devotion, instructed me in the highest knowledge, understanding which the *Jiva* finds the *Maya* of the Lord out, and becomes one with Him. So I was left there alone with my poor mother, who was exceedingly affectionate and devoted to me. In fact her great attachment became a source of anxiety and fear to me and I used constantly to think how I could free myself from the bondage.

But the hour of my liberty was not long in coming. One night, when my mother had gone out of the house to milk some cows she accidentally trod upon a serpent, which struck her immediately and killed her. I was not the least sorry for myself at this mishap. I rather took it as a special act of grace of the Lord to me.

After this I left the place and started to travel. On my way I saw many flourishing cities, towns, villages, pastures, mines of gold, silver and other metals and, beautifully clothed mountains teeming with bird and insect life. Next I came to a huge forest. It was deep and trackless and seemed to be inhabited by all sorts of wild animals and snakes. However, as I had no other alternative, and as I felt very tired and thirsty I entered it and soon found a ~~an~~cessor of water with shady trees around a resting place. I had a bath and a ~~dunk~~and took my seat under the shade of an *Ashoka* tree. When I felt rested, I ~~be~~an meditate upon the Lord in the way taught me by the *Rishis*. The spot being exceedingly calm and nice my mind soon

became absorbed in meditation and I realised the presence of the Lord in me. Intense emotions of love and devotion welled up in my heart, my eyes were filled with tears and the hairs on my body stood on end. Soon I lost all outward consciousness and was merged in indescribable bliss. But it was not for long, for suddenly I missed the Lord and felt exceedingly miserable. I got up in a pang, sat down again to collect myself and tried hard to meditate on the Lord as before, but in vain. I felt like one unable to see on account of some disease, though having eyes. Then the Voice of the Lord, deep and refreshing, spoke as if consoling me: "You shall not be able to see ME again in this incarnation Undeveloped Yogis who have not been able to burn the seeds of their desires cannot see ME. Your intense devotion—the result of your association with *Sadhus* has brought about the present realisation. Association with *Sadhus* has fixed your heart on ME. You will come to ME after leaving this low plane of existence".

The influence of *Sat-sanga* is inestimable.

SANANDA.

We are told by the mariners who sail on the Indian Seas, that many times they can tell their approach to certain islands long before they can see them, by the sweet fragrance of the sandal-wood that is wafted far out upon the deep. Do you not see how it would serve to have such a soul playing through such a body that as you go here and there a subtle, silent force goes out from you that all feel and are influenced by; so that you carry with you an Inspiration and continually shed a benediction wherever you go; so that your friends and all people will say—His coming brings peace and joy into our homes, welcome his coming; so that as you pass along the street, tired and weary, and even sin-sick men and women will feel a certain divine touch that will awaken new desires and a new life in them; that will make the very horse as you pass him turn his head with a strange, half-human, longing look? Such are the subtle powers of the human soul when it makes itself translucent to the Divine.—Ralph W. Trine.

CIVIC CREED

RENUNCIATION, says the Indian proverb, is a fast to some, but a feast to others. The rich men and women who make their homes, in Western cities, amongst the poor and the lowly seem to find it altogether a feast. They scorn the suggestion of sacrifice in it. They have no fear of joy. And in the intercourse which they thus establish between class and class, it would seem that they have added a real and permanent good to the city's life. Is it not perhaps true that we only need to love deeply one class or nation in which we were not born, in order to reach the conception of Humanity? Of course I am sorry for everyone who does not find himself specially called to the love of India! But meanwhile, is it not the absolute duty of each one of us, who would make life full and rich for others or for himself, to set out deliberately to serve men of some race or creed or caste that is not his own? To serve them, too, with fulness of devotion, that shrinks from no lengths of helpfulness? Was there any moment of Sri Ramakrishna's life so great as those acts of menial service? Perhaps what we want to remember is that some degree of this blessedness is open to all of us, householders as much as Sannyasins.

Could we not modify to our Indian needs this *Civic Creed* that I find hung in every primary school in Chicago?

CIVIC CREED:

We are made of one blood all nations

of men, and we are his children, brothers and sisters all. We are citizens of these United States and we believe our Flag stands for self-sacrifice for the good of all the people. We want, therefore, to be true citizens of our great city, and will show our love for her by our works.

Chicago does not ask us to die for her welfare; she asks us to live for her, and so to live and so to act that her government may be pure, her officers honest, and every corner of her territory shall be a place fit to grow the best men and women who shall rule over her.

For India cries to us—if ever a land cried to her children—to live for her and for her people, "that every corner of her territory shall be a place fit to grow the best men and women"

NIVEDITA

Self-love is, in almost all men, such an over-weight, that they are incredulous of a man's habitual preference of the general good to his own; but when they see it proved by sacrifices of ease, wealth, rank, and of life itself, there is no limit to their admiration. This has made the power of the saints of the East and West, who have led the religion of great nations. Self-sacrifice is the real miracle out of which all the reported miracles grew.—Emerson.

The love of our brethren is not another from the love of God; it is but the streaming forth of it, or the reflection of it.—Robert Leighton.

A LEAF FROM SHIVAJI'S LIFE

A HISTORICAL STORY.

FOUR SANNYASINS.

IT was a May evening. The setting sun was painting the western horizon with all his colours. The black waters of the Jumna were shedding a deep blue lustre on its solitary banks. And man in the Capital of the Great Moghul Empire turned to his tiny lamp for light.

In that dark night four Sannyasins could have been seen walking fast along the banks of the Jumna. Seeing none about, they presently jumped into the river and reaching the other shore, the foremost of them said, "It will be advisable for us to travel eastward."

The second : "It is not advisable for you, my lord, to go alone."

"But what shall I do and where shall I go with this child hanging on to me? You better take him with you and go some other way. By the grace of the Mother of the Universe I shall soon join you again after visiting many holy places."

The third now broke his silence and observed : "We cannot disobey master's orders, but at the same time we can't make up our minds to leave him alone, lest any danger may befall him. Let all the responsibilities of looking after the child rest on us."

The Guru had to yield to the earnest wishes of his disciples, and they all went on their way eastward. They, with the child Sannyasin,—who though very young in years looked like a strong and healthy boy of fourteen,—then visited Hardwar, Ajodhya, Baranasi, Prayag and Dvaranand started next for Puri.

AN ENCOUNTER.

In the middle of the rains that the four

Sannyasins arrived in Bengal, an altogether new country to them,—the exquisitely luxuriant beauty of the tropical low country with its exuberant growth of forests and green. They were wont to take to solitary banks and forest paths, and being thus accustomed to forest life, the lonesome and frightful aspects of nature were known faces to them.

As they were passing through a dense jungle a huge tiger emerged from the thicket with a loud roar. The foremost Sannyasin leaving the child to the care of the other two rushed out with his club to meet the ferocious beast. As it sprang upon him he dealt such a terrible blow with the club on its head that it had to retreat for a while. It charged a second and a third time and the struggle was hot and severe. But at last the club broke and he was under the tiger's sway. Seeing the imminent danger, Tann, one of his companions came to the rescue and killed the tiger.

But the master was severely mangled. His disciples washed the wounds, applied the juice and plaster of some herbs and dressed them. He was now quite exhausted and after two hours journey reached the outskirts of the city of Murshidabad.

THEIR NEW HOME.

They did not rest long under the shade of a tree before their master was attacked with fever attended with terrible fits of shaking which made him delirious. The disciples naturally became very anxious and seeing no other means but taking shelter in some house, Tann went to the town in search of a suitable place. He searched long but in vain, no one was willing to house four penitentless beggars.

As he was returning with a sorrowful heart, a Brahman accosted him and asked what he was about. He related to him the trouble. The Brahman took pity and consented to keep them in his house.

Tam followed the Brahman to his residence. The only other person living there was his old mother. Seeing it quite solitary and suitable, he brought his master and companions in.

THEIR BENEFACTOR.

A month had passed by since they took refuge in the Brahman's house. The master had recovered a little and wanted to be left alone. His companions returned to Benares with the child Sanyasin. The good Brahman would never take a morsel of food without first serving it to the Sanyasin. The Brahman was well versed in the Shastras, and devoted to the good of others. While staying at Benares on a pilgrimage he lost his wife and children. Since then he had renounced the world and lived a sort of *Vanaprastha* life maintaining himself and his mother by alms. Most of his time was now spent in the service of his guest and mother, and the rest in worship and study.

Another month was spent by the Sanyasin at this good Brahman's house. His wounds had almost healed up, and he was thinking of taking leave from his benefactor within a week or so, when an unthought-of occurrence changed the whole tide of affairs.

SKILFUL SACRIFICE OF THE HERO.

The story of Sayesta Khan, the governor of Murshidabad, knows no bounds to-day. The letter brought by the orderly this morning has turned his head. The expectation of wreaking vengeance on his old enemy was making his heart too big for his chest, as his eyes ran to and fro between the stumps of his mutilated right hand and the letter which he held in his left. Again and again he read the letter which ran as follows :—

"Shivaji in the disguise of a Sanyasin is now

putting up at the house of the Brahman who takes this letter to you. If you wish to secure him, follow this Brahman quietly after awarding him two thousand gold mohurs as present. But if you play false with the Brahman by not paying him the full sum, you will surely have to repent it afterwards."

The letter vividly brought to his memory the terrible experiences of that dreadful night in the prison of Puna when Shivaji paid him a visit with some fierce looking Maoli soldiers and punished him by cutting off the fingers of his right hand and murdering his son. The wailing of the women, that fearful wrestling with the sword, the desperate courage of Shivaji, Sayesta Khan's escape for dear life through the window, the disastrous results of the next day's hard fighting, and his subsequent humiliation before the Emperor of Delhi,—all these incidents rolled before his mind's eye one by one. How intense must have been his emotions to see his long-dreamed-of ambition almost gratified, of paying back in his own coin, a foe who was now almost in his hands, without a drop of bloodshed, without the least effort on his part, surrendered willingly and voluntarily!

Sayesta Khan had been overjoyed to learn that the "mountain rat" had been imprisoned through a treachery by the Emperor of Delhi, but the subsequent news of his escape from the prison rent his heart with disappointment, which was haunting him like a ghost till now. He immediately followed the Brahman with some trusty and sturdy armed men. He did not care to neglect Shivaji's stipulation about the money as he was fully conscious of what that might mean in the near future. Shivaji's face was too well-known to him; he had him chained and presented the money to the Brahman. The Brahman stood dumb-founded with the bag of money, not being able to make out what all that meant.

(To be continued)

VIRAJANANDA

CORRESPONDENCE

VEDANTA WORK IN AMERICA

The Editor, Prabuddha Bharata.
SIR,

THE many New York friends of Swami Vivekananda, greatly enjoyed his sojourn here, on his return from California in June 1900, before he sailed for Paris, France. The Swami's visit was an unexpected pleasure, and formed a delightful winding up to what the members of the Vedanta Society have considered, a very successful season. He spoke on Sunday morning, June 10th, the subject being, "Vedanta Philosophy". The rooms were filled to their utmost capacity with old friends who came eagerly to hear him. On Friday of the following week, a reception was given, that the opportunity might be afforded the old students and friends to once again meet the Master, grasp his hand and enjoy his presence and kind words. He gave a short talk that evening on the object of Vedanta, and the Vedanta work in America.

Sister Nivedita was also in the City and gave an interesting talk in the rooms on "The Ideals of the Hindu Woman", answering many questions, to the enlightenment of the American mind, on the subject of the simple, beautiful life and purity of thought of our Eastern sisters. She gave one more lecture, an interesting account of the "Ancient Aks of India": long familiarity with this subject made the talk most instructive; we felt it a privilege to listen to this sister whose earnest thought and ceaseless effort are all for the helping of her fellow-women, and we bade her "God-speed" as she sailed from these shores on June the 28th.

On July 3rd, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Turiyananda left New York; the former going to Detroit to visit old friends, and Swami Turiyananda to California, where

he has since established the Shanti Ashramā. On Swami Vivekananda's return from Detroit, he remained with us for a few days rest before sailing for Paris, July the 20th.

In July, Swami Abhedananda left the City with Dr. H. C. Parker, President of the Vedanta Society, for a rest in the Adirondacks, enjoying many pleasant tramps through the mountain region during the two weeks of his stay. From there he went to Chesterfield, Ind., and lectured before a Spiritualistic Camp Meeting, his audience numbering about seven thousand people, were very enthusiastic listeners; he spoke for about an hour and a half, and answered many questions each time. The subjects chosen were, "The Religious Ideas of the Hindus", and "Immortality and Reincarnation". After leaving this place, he visited friends in Massachusetts, after which he went to Greenacre, Maine, where he gave several lectures, greatly enjoyed by his old friends and admirers. On September 23d, he lectured before the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston, at a beautiful summer resort called Minnewasca, subject, "The Religious Beliefs of the Hindus." Returning to New York at the end of September, he spoke before the Metaphysical Convention, on the "Universality of Vedanta". This Convention was a meeting of the Mental Scientists, Mental Healers, Faith Healers and Divine Healers; in this talk he showed how the Vedanta Philosophy includes all the ideas which these healers use, in the branch known as Raja Yoga.

On November the 7th, Swami Abhedananda represented the Hindu and Sanskrit scholars of India, paying tribute to the memory of their late friend, Prof. E. Max

Muller, at a public meeting held in Columbia University, New York, under the auspices of the Philosophical and Philological departments; he spoke on behalf of India, showing in a brief address how much Max Muller had done for India, and how greatly he is respected among the Hindu and Sanskrit scholars, also setting forth the lasting benefit he has conferred upon the Western countries, by presenting to them the noble philosophies of the East; among whose later works we find "The Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna."

On December the 13th, 1900, Swami Abhedananda was invited to speak before a Council of Jewish women, at Temple Israel, New York. The subject for discussion was "Historical Significance of the Jewish Festivals, with Special Reference to Chanukah." The Swami gave an interesting talk on the festivals of the ancient Jews, pointing out the similarity existing between them and the ancient Hindu festivals, also between the laws of Moses and the laws of Manu. The Swami spoke on this interesting subject for nearly half an hour; his remarks concerning the Jewish festivals were highly appreciated by the Jewish audience and his broad and liberal views regarding Judaism, were extremely attractive, as well as instructive.

In the Vedanta Rooms on the Saturday morning before Christmas, a merry group of little children was gathered about a wonderful Christmas-tree. Laughter and cries of delight were heard; they sang songs, played and recited and altogether had a glorious time. Swami Abhedananda was there, merry and happy as any child, and before the gifts were distributed, gave them a beautiful little talk touching the origin of Christmas.

On Christmas night, December the 25th, the Swami gave his usual Tuesday evening lecture on the origin of the Christmas festival, showing the similarity that exists

between the birth day festival of Krishna and that of Christ. The lecture room was gaily decorated with holly, mistletoe and trailing greens tied with scarlet streamers. The children's tree, still standing festooned with shining tinsel and hanging baubles of green, red and gold, surmounted by the figure of the angel and the star, formed a picturesque background for the Swami as he sat before it explaining the original object of decorating the Christmas tree, and telling once more the story of Christ's birth.

On the first Sunday of the New Year, it was most apropos that the Swami should call the attention of his audience to the "Religious Need of the Twentieth Century"; the following is an extract from one of the most prominent daily papers, the New York "Sun".

A TWENTIETH CENTURY RELIGION.

With no scheme of salvation, no need of Heaven, no fear of Hell.

The Swami Abhedananda lectured in the Carnegie Lyceum yesterday afternoon on the "Religious Need of the Twentieth Century." He spoke of tuning the molecules of the brain cells to harmonize with the vibrations of the Cosmic Mind, and so gaining power, and he said that the mind and matter were not dual entities, but the subjective and objective manifestations of the unknown.

"The twentieth century needs a religion" he said, "with no scheme for salvation, no need for heaven or hell, no fear of eternal punishment. The twentieth century needs a religion free from sacerdotal institutions and free from all books, scriptures and personalities. The twentieth century needs a religion with a concept of God; not personal nor impersonal but beyond both, a God whose supreme aspect will harmonize with the ultimate reality of the universe. The twentieth century religion must accept the ultimate conclusions of all the philosophies of the world."

Among the significant blessings ushered in with the dawn of the new century, is the evidence of a firmer foothold of the Vedanta Philosophy in the lives of many Western students. We feel that it is wholly due to Swami Abhedananda's persistence and untiring faithfulness, that so much has been accomplished and we rejoice to see how steadily the glorious message is spreading. The inhabitants of a great cosmopolitan city like New York are by nature restless,—moving hither and thither anxiously seeking, they know not what. The things of yesterday have no place among the desires of to-day; how tremendousy difficult then, the task of reaching the mind, the heart, or even the ear, for any length of time, but the power of the Swami is great and each succeeding lecture finds him making a larger application and attracting greater numbers. The attention with which they listen to the beautiful and impressive words, is often remarked,—how clearly every word reaches the most distant part of the hall, with no apparent effort on the part of the speaker, a pleasing contrast to the excited manner employed by many of our pulpit orators, who resort to much noise and gesticulation in their efforts to convince their hearers of certain truths. The Swami's power to hold their absorbed attention lies in the simplicity and directness with which he unfolds the Divine message—a message, truth to tell, not easily understood by those absorbed in the smaller claims of daily life, and to whom the highest wisdom must seem but a distything and confusing element. The fortunate ones who have turned aside from the mad rush and whirl of worldly enjoyment long enough to listen to this eloquence have caught only a glimpse, it may be, but sufficient to rouse a desire for a more peaceful and nobler life, the spiritual life of the Yogi. Again and again have they come to listen and become more thoroughly awaken-

ed, become earnest seekers; they find the better way is open, the darkness which at first seemed so dense, proves to be only apparent, and a little persevering effort discloses the path of peace close at hand.

The lectures, "How to Become a Yogi" and "The Effects of Breathing Exercises" drew large audiences, impressing many with a desire to become members of the Vedanta Society and receive the Swami's instructions in Yoga. Besides the more serious who applied, came a number of excitable enthusiasts of a day, beseeching the Swami to give them "quick" lessons in breathing and in Yoga, thereby making them eternally fit! But the Swami, with far-seeing wisdom, first advised serious consideration on their part, insisting upon a written application for membership to the Society, and detailed reason for wishing to join the steadfast ones, kindly pointing out to them the necessity of thoroughly understanding the serious nature and deep meaning of the exercises.

Two classes are held on Thursday evening, one at eight o'clock for new students, and at eight-thirty for the advanced class; the membership has so increased that it became necessary to form another class to be held at ten o'clock on Saturday morning, one hour before the instruction of the children. All are new students in this Yoga class, young men and women, very earnest and appreciative.

Lectures given in the Lyceum during February are entitled as follows: "Individuality and Personality," "Transmigration and Reincarnation," "Spiritualism and Ancestor Worship," and "The Practice of Self-control."

On Tuesday evening, February the 9th, the Swami excelled himself in a discourse on "My Master," opening, even to those who had heard before, a fuller realization of the way leading to God-consciousness. He told of this saintly example who lived upon the earth such a short time ago, making

the Christ teachings more clear and vital to all. Those to whom the possibility of a divine life upon the earth in this present material age was quite new and astonishing, felt a throb of wonder, an eager desire to understand and grasp more fully the meaning of Truth and Freedom ; verily, it must imply a greater renunciation of this small being in order to become conscious of the SELF. All felt with reverence and love and thankful hearts, the inestimable blessing of listening to these teachings from one who had long known the divine atmosphere of the MASTER.

On the following morning a celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday was held in the Vedanta Rooms ; a beautiful and impressive hour to those devout students gathered to-

gether on that blessed occasion, feeling deeply the great privilege of partaking with the Swami in the offer of worship and praise. The room was sweet with incense, flower and fruit ; the sunshine streaming in added a golden halo to the picture of the Master, enthroned amid fragrant remembrances. Students gathered about for meditation, many seated upon the floor, while the Swami chanted soft praise and worship of the Divine, drawing all present into closer communion and adoring together the Beloved One, He who is coming to be known among us as bearer of the word from the DIVINE MOTHER.

Vedanta Society, YOURS &c.,
NEW YORK. B. and C.

IN DEFENCE OF THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

IN publishing the following cutting sent us by an esteemed friend from the United States, America, we wish particularly to express our indebtedness and offer our best thanks to Dr. Janes (in which we are sure not a few of our readers will join us) for raising his powerful voice, time and again, unsolicited, in the cause of truth and justice, to save India and Indians from the half-truths and exaggerations of its self-called friends.—Ed.

To the Editor of The Standard Union:

The notice of the meeting of the Brooklyn Ramabai Circle, in your issue of March 20, goes out of its way to attack the Swami Vivekananda for statements which he is alleged to have made in his lectures before the Brooklyn Ethical Association five or six years ago. As the Swami is far away in his native India, working for the elevation of his people, men and women alike, perhaps you will permit a friend to say a word in his behalf.

I heard all the lectures of the Swami

Vivekananda which were given under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Association, and to my certain knowledge he never mentioned the name of the Pundita Ramabai in any one of them. After the lecture given in the hall of the Long Island Historical Society, in response to a direct question from some person in the audience, the Swami replied temperately, saying that he wished well for the educational work of Ramabai, but dissented from some of the methods which she had adopted for obtaining money in this country.

In one of his lectures at the Pouch Mansion, he also spoke of the Hindu widows, declaring it unjust to state that they were generally subjected to cruelty or oppression in the Indian homes. He admitted that the prejudice against remarriage, and the custom which makes the widow a member of the husband's family instead of that of her own parents inflicted some hardships upon widows

in India, and favored all wise efforts for their education which would render them self-supporting and in this way alleviate their condition. He emphasized his desire for the education and elevation of the women of his country, including the widows, by volunteering to give the entire proceeds of one of his lectures in support of the school of Babu Satisipada Banerjee, at Baranagar, near Calcutta, the institution of which preceded that of the Pundita Ramabai, at Poona, and where, if I am not mistaken, the Pundita herself obtained the first inspiration for her work. This lecture was given, and the proceeds were forwarded to Babu Satisipada Banerjee, and duly acknowledged.

Since his return to India with his help and under the auspices of his fellow monks of the Ramakrishna Math, near Calcutta, an English-lady, Miss Margaret E. Noble, whose name describes her character, and who is known in India as "Sister Nivedita," has inaugurated a work, for the education of Hindu girls of wide-reaching beneficent promise. Several thousand dollars were contributed in this country toward Miss Noble's work, which has the good-will of the Hindu people in Calcutta, and elsewhere. Miss Noble is now in England, lecturing in the interest of her work before large audiences, and purposes soon to return to India and devote her life to the elevation of the Hindu women.

The late Prof. Max Muller, of Oxford, who is mentioned in your notice of the Ramabai Circles as "the friend of Ramabai," was also the friend of the Swami Vivekananda, and the biographer of the Swami's master, Ramakrishna, whom he regarded as one of the most remarkable men of modern times in India. The Swami Saradananda, the friend and companion of Vivekananda, furnished Prof. Max Muller with much of the material for his life of the Hindu saint,

Babu Protap Chunder Mozumdar, also well-known in this country, has likewise rendered to Ramakrishna the tribute of his high appreciation and respect.

Mrs. Ole Bull, who recently spent a year in India, travelling through the country from Bombay to Calcutta, and spending a summer in Kashmir, confirms the testimony of the Swami Vivekananda as to the beautiful type of character exemplified by many of the Hindu women, and to the regard in which they are habitually held by the men. There are doubtless cases of abuse of child-widows, and it is surely to be desired that they shall have ample opportunities for improving their present conditions and escaping from the disabilities imposed by the prejudice against remarriage; but to allege that the cruel abuse of widows is habitual in India is doubtless as unjust as it would be to quote the records of our police courts as indications of the habitual character of our civilization in the United States. I have valued friends in India, of whose truthfulness I can vouch, who have child widows in their own families, and who have never been personally cognizant of a single case of abuse or cruelty.

In justice to a distant people who cannot defend themselves, we should guard against judging an entire civilization by special cases of privation and hardship, and in justice to the Swami Vivekananda it should be remembered that his criticism of Ramabai—never volunteered and seldom uttered in public—were always directed against her unwise methods of exaggeration and wholesale denunciation of her people, and never against her legitimate educational work. In the light of the facts herein narrated this must, I think, be clear to your readers.

LEWIS G. JAMES.
Former President of the Brooklyn Ethical Association.

Cambridge, Mass., March 21, 1901.